

Please amend the specification as follows: Page 1, Before Paragraph 1

**This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/509,054, filed on March 19, 2003.**

#### **FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

The present invention relates generally to the controlled release of molecules, and to artificial muscle-type hydrogel and polymer blends, also called “artificial muscles”, useful in controlled electro-responsive release of macromolecules. More particularly, the invention relates to actuating or drug delivery devices containing an artificial muscle valve and micropump that controls the release of therapeutic fluids – including implantable platforms – and specific methods using these artificial muscle-powered actuating devices.